

# Words In The News

## Teacher's pack

Lesson plan and student worksheets  
with answers

Indian yoga guru dies –  
6 February 2008



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# BBC Learning English – Words in the News

## Indian yoga guru dies – 6 February 2008

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**Level:** Intermediate and above

**Topic:** The Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the man who brought the appeal of Eastern meditation to the Western, world has died.

**Language:** Vocabulary of a news report

**Aims:**

Reading skills	– Understanding a short news report
Language skills	– Vocabulary – expressions with 'yourself'
Writing skills	– Writing a news report

**Materials:**

Worksheet 1	– Comprehension questions
Worksheet 2	– Vocabulary matching task
Worksheet 3	– Grammar/language focus – vocabulary

News story – Available online at:

[http://www.bbclearningenglish.com/newseenglish/witn/2008/02/080206\\_yogi\\_dies.shtml](http://www.bbclearningenglish.com/newseenglish/witn/2008/02/080206_yogi_dies.shtml)

**Preparation:** Before the lesson, make enough copies of worksheets 2 and 3 so that there is 1 worksheet for every 4 – 5 students. Cut up the vocabulary and explanations to make a matching exercise. Students also need one copy each of worksheet 1.

If you have access to the internet in your classroom, you could play this short recording (in the follow-up activity) of a journalist talking to the Maharishi about meeting the Beatles:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/player/nol/newsid\\_7230000/newsid\\_7230200?redirect=7230223.stm&news=1&bbram=1&bbwm=1&nbwm=1&nbram=1&asb=1](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/player/nol/newsid_7230000/newsid_7230200?redirect=7230223.stm&news=1&bbram=1&bbwm=1&nbwm=1&nbram=1&asb=1)

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#### LESSON STAGES

##### A Stimulate student interest in text

Ask students to match these major religions and beliefs with the famous people who founded them or were closely associated with them.

Religion / Belief	Person
Hinduism	Mother Teresa
Islam	Maharishi Mahesh Yogi
Catholicism	Mahatma Gandhi
Transcendental Meditation	The prophet Muhammad

##### Answers:

Religion / Belief	Person
Hinduism	Mahatma Gandhi
Islam	The prophet Muhammad
Catholicism	Mother Teresa
Transcendental Meditation	Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

If it's appropriate and not contentious, ask students what religion they belong to or if they are atheists. And have a quick survey to find out what the most popular religion is in the class.

##### B Pre-teach essential vocabulary

Elicit/present key vocabulary that students need either to understand the key points in the text or to understand and/or answer any questions that you'll set them later in the lesson. The vocabulary is from Words in the News (so you can elicit the vocabulary by using the explanations provided online or below).

You could either pre-teach the vocabulary at this stage of the lesson or you could use the vocabulary building activity from further down in this lesson plan. Have students working together in small groups and ask them to try to match the vocabulary with the definitions. Encourage them to work with the other groups to pool their knowledge.

When they have done as much as they can, if they have dictionaries, ask them to look up the words to check their answers and to find out the definitions of any words they are not sure of. If they don't have dictionaries, check their answers and give them help with any words they aren't sure of.

Whichever method you use to elicit/present the vocabulary, you should then model it (say it clearly, highlighting the word stress) and get them to repeat the words after you.

##### spiritual enlightenment struck a chord with many celebrities

a lot of famous people were attracted to the possibility of gaining a deep understanding of religious beliefs and teachings

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#### **soon tired of his message**

quickly became bored with his teachings

#### **vast**

large, very big

#### **transmitted courses on meditation**

broadcast lessons on how to think about only one thing, in a religious way, so that you become calm and relaxed

#### **brightened**

made more interesting and colourful

#### **yogic-flying candidates**

people who wanted to be elected as politicians who said that by meditating they could fly

#### **closely allied to**

had strong ties with, had a close relationship with

#### **guru**

a religious teacher or leader

#### **contradictions of his lifestyle**

the way he lived his life (with his large house etc) seemed to be the opposite of what he taught (encouraging people to follow a simple, religious life)

#### **Just be yourself**

Behave in your usual manner, rather than behaving in a way you think other people might like or expect. Be true to yourself

### **C Written record of vocabulary**

Write the words on the board, eliciting spelling as you write. Elicit and show the word stress of each item and word class, if appropriate.

Give students some time to copy the boardwork into their notebooks.

Boardwork:

**sp<sup>i</sup>ritual enlighten<sup>m</sup>ent str<sup>u</sup>ck a ch<sup>o</sup>rd with**

**soon t<sup>i</sup>red of his m<sup>e</sup>ssage**

**vast**

**transm<sup>i</sup>tted c<sup>o</sup>urses on m<sup>e</sup>ditat<sup>i</sup>on**

**bri<sup>g</sup>htened**

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yogic-flying candidates

closely allied to

guru

contradictions of his lifestyle

Just be yourself

#### D Set a skimming question

Tell the students they are going to read a text about Transcendental Meditation. Ask them to predict any words they think they'll read in the text. Put their answers on the board:

Example answers:

meditation          guru          India          vegetarian          spiritual          religion

Then, put this question on the board:

How many of our words or phrases are mentioned in the text?

Students read text the first time.

Give them a time limit (1 - 2 minutes) to read the text quickly to find the answer to the question. They do not need to understand the details of the text to answer it.

#### E Check answers

Answers will depend on what vocabulary students predicted. From the example vocab items 'spiritual' is mentioned in paragraph 1, 'meditation' in paragraph 2 and 'guru' in paragraph 3.

#### F Set specific information questions

Hand out worksheet 1 or use the online quiz. Students complete the worksheet to help them understand the text in more detail. Give them a time limit (5 - 6 minutes) to read the text a second time in more detail and to answer the questions.

#### G Check answers

Elicit True or False answers. Direct attention to a particular paragraph if an answer is wrong to try to elicit the correct answer (see worksheet 1 and answer key).

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#### **H Vocabulary consolidation/building**

Students do the vocabulary matching exercise (worksheet 2 that you cut up before the lesson). In small groups they match the correct word with the right definition.

#### **I Check answers**

Elicit answers. If an answer is wrong, ask other students to try to elicit the correct answer.

#### **J Vocabulary focus: Vocabulary – expressions with 'yourself'**

Ask students to call out any expressions they can find in today's text with the word 'self' in them ('killed himself' and 'be yourself'). Elicit from students what each expression means ('he committed suicide' and 'be natural, true to yourself').

Then use worksheet 3 to focus on these and other expressions with 'yourself'.

#### **K Check answers**

If an answer is wrong, ask other students to try to elicit the correct answer (see worksheet 3 and answer key).

#### **L Follow-up activity: Speaking**

If you have access to the internet in your classroom, play this short recording of a journalist talking to the Maharishi about meeting the Beatles:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/player/nol/newsid\\_7230000/newsid\\_7230200?redirect=7230223.stm&news=1&bbram=1&bbwm=1&nbwm=1&nbram=1&asb=1](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaselector/check/player/nol/newsid_7230000/newsid_7230200?redirect=7230223.stm&news=1&bbram=1&bbwm=1&nbwm=1&nbram=1&asb=1)

Then, tell the students they are going to write a short radio or newspaper report about the meeting between the Maharishi and the Beatles, as if they were journalists in 1967. They should include descriptions of what the people were wearing, what they looked like, where the meeting took place and what questions the Beatles asked and the answers they received. They should also include some quotes from all the people involved after the meeting about how they really felt during the meeting and what (if anything) they learnt from it.

Give students 5 minutes to think about their pieces and 10 minutes to write their reports.

Circulate, while they are working, giving help with grammar and spelling, if necessary and unobtrusively making notes of any errors you hear.

#### **M Feedback**

Collect the students' work. If possible, stick the reports up where everyone can see them. Ask students to look at each report. Have a class vote to decide on the best one.

Give praise for correct language, and give feedback on incorrect language. You could write some example phrases or sentences on the board and elicit from students which ones are correct and which ones are wrong and why.

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### STUDENT WORKSHEET 1

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#### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Are the following sentences true or false?

1.	Some very famous people were interested in the Maharishi's teachings.	T/F
2.	All four Beatles became life-long followers of the Maharishi.	T/F
3.	The Maharishi lived a very simple life in the Netherlands.	T/F
4.	Members of the Natural Law Party who wanted to get elected in the 1990s believed that meditating gave them special powers.	T/F
5.	It is believed that the Maharishi group is very rich.	T/F
6.	When asked about the differences between his teachings and the way he lived his life, he told people that because he was the leader he needed to have a lot of money.	T/F

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**STUDENT WORKSHEET 2**

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**VOCABULARY**

**Match these words and phrases to their definitions.**

1.	<b>spiritual enlightenment</b> <b>struck a chord with</b>	A.	had strong ties with, had a close relationship with
2.	<b>soon tired of his message</b>	B	broadcast lessons on how to think about only one thing, in a religious way, so that you become calm and relaxed
3.	<b>vast</b>	C.	the way he lived his life (with his large house etc) seemed to be the opposite of what he taught (encouraging people to follow a simple, religious life)
4.	<b>transmitted courses on meditation</b>	D.	a lot of famous people were attracted to the possibility of gaining a deep understanding of religious beliefs and teachings
5.	<b>brightened</b>	E.	a religious teacher or leader
6.	<b>yogic-flying candidates</b>	F.	large, very big
7.	<b>closely allied to</b>	G.	made more interesting and colourful
8.	<b>guru</b>	H.	quickly become bored with his teachings
9.	<b>contradictions of his lifestyle</b>	I.	Behave in your usual manner, rather than behaving in a way you think other people might like or expect. Be true to yourself
10.	<b>Just be yourself</b>	J.	people who wanted to be elected as politicians who said that by meditating they could fly



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### STUDENT WORKSHEET 3

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#### EXPRESSIONS WITH 'YOURSELF'

Match these expressions and phrases with their meanings. This first one has been done for you:

	Expression		Meaning
1.	<i>Be yourself</i>	A.	A slightly rude way of saying 'Do whatever you want to do although I don't agree with what you're doing'
2.	Kill yourself	B.	a rude way of telling someone to leave you alone and to go away and stop annoying you
3.	DIY (Do-it-yourself)	C.	My opinion is not the same as yours. I disagree with what you said
4.	Please yourself	D.	Commit suicide. End your own life deliberately
5.	Speak for yourself	E.	<i>Behave in your usual manner, rather than behaving in a way you think other people might like or expect. Be true to yourself</i>
6.	Go (away and) play with your self	F.	Do tasks around the home or garden rather than pay someone to do the work for you

1.	E.
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

Now, complete the sentences using the correct form of one of the expressions:

1. He enjoys painting and decorating but I hate doing any of that \_\_\_\_\_ stuff.
2. A: I hate the way he's always moaning and complaining about his tough life, don't you?  
B: \_\_\_\_\_! I feel sorry for him. I think he's just telling us the truth about his life.
3. \_\_\_\_\_. Go to the party if you want but, I promise you, it'll be really boring and the food will be dreadful!
4. No matter how nervous you are on a first date, it's important to just \_\_\_\_\_.
5. She was so depressed after failing her exams, she tried to \_\_\_\_\_.
6. I need some peace and quiet to finish this report, so kids can you just \_\_\_\_\_?

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#### ANSWER KEY

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#### STUDENT WORKSHEET 1

1. **True** – Paragraph 1 says, 'The Maharishi's promises of better health and spiritual enlightenment struck a chord with many celebrities'.
2. **False** – Paragraph 1 says, 'John, Paul and Ringo soon tired of his message, while George Harrison switched to the Hare Krishna movement'.
3. **False** – Paragraph 2 says, 'His vast home in the Netherlands'.
4. **True** – Paragraph 2 says, 'European elections in the 90s were brightened by the yogic-flying candidates of the Natural Law Party, closely allied to the Maharishi's beliefs'.
5. **True** – Paragraph 3 says, 'His movement ... is said to be worth at least two billion pounds'.
6. **False** – Paragraph 3 says, 'Any questions to the guru about the contradictions of his lifestyle brought a simple answer: "Just be yourself".'

#### STUDENT WORKSHEET 2

- |             |             |             |             |              |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. <b>D</b> | 2. <b>H</b> | 3. <b>F</b> | 4. <b>B</b> | 5. <b>G</b>  |
| 6. <b>J</b> | 7. <b>A</b> | 8. <b>E</b> | 9. <b>C</b> | 10. <b>I</b> |

#### STUDENT WORKSHEET 3

1.	E.
2.	D.
3.	F.
4.	A.
5.	C.
6.	B

- |                    |                                       |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. DIY             | 2. Speak for yourself                 |
| 3. Please yourself | 4. Be yourself                        |
| 5. kill herself    | 6. Go (away and) play with yourselves |

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*The man who brought the appeal of Eastern meditation to the Western world has died. In the 1960s, the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi became world famous almost overnight and, over the years, he has built up a following of about six million people worldwide. This report from Chris Jones:*

The Maharishi's promises of better health and spiritual enlightenment struck a chord with many celebrities. The Beatles were spending a weekend with him in north Wales, when their manager, Brian Epstein, killed himself in 1967. John, Paul and Ringo soon tired of his message, while George Harrison switched to the Hare Krishna movement, but the Maharishi's business empire spread from Delhi to America.

His vast home in the Netherlands became a tourist attraction and transmitted courses on meditation via a global cable channel. British and European elections in the 90s were brightened by the yogic-flying candidates of the Natural Law Party, closely allied to the Maharishi's beliefs.

His movement, officially non-profit-making, is said to be worth at least two billion pounds. Any questions to the guru about the contradictions of his lifestyle brought a simple answer: "Just be yourself".

#### **spiritual enlightenment struck a chord with many celebrities**

a lot of famous people were attracted to the possibility of gaining a deep understanding of religious beliefs and teachings

#### **soon tired of his message**

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